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SUBJECT: CANADA MAY FUND BRITISH JUDICIAL REFORM EFFORT IN TT

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Canada may fund a British initiative to embed an expert in judicial reform within the GOTT as early as the first half of 2010. Under the program developed from a 2007 assessment visit, an official with the British Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) would address several broad areas of judicial modernization including forensics-based evidence, cybercrime, money laundering, human trafficking, improved technology for gathering and recording evidence, and recruitment of prosecutors. The CPS currently lacks funding for this initiative, but the Government of Canada (GOC) may fund it under a retooling of its assistance programming for the Caribbean. The Brits may seek USG assistance to implement other judicial and law-enforcement reform programs of common interest. We will continue to work with both countries' Missions to Trinidad and Tobago to flesh out these ideas, de-conflict technical assistance programming, and leverage our engagement on security matters. END SUMMARY.

BRITS OFFER TO EMBED JUDICIAL EXPERT IN GOTT

¶2. (SBU) We met with counterparts from the High Commissions of Britain and Canada January 11 to discuss law enforcement and judicial reform programs in Trinidad and Tobago (TT). The Brits have developed a proposal to embed a member of their Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as an adviser within the GOTT to help modernize and professionalize judicial functions in the areas of forensics-based evidence, cybercrime, money laundering, human trafficking, improved technology for gathering and recording evidence, and recruitment of prosecutors. James Dolan of the British High Commission outlined the program that sprang from a CPS assessment visit in 2007. Head of the CPS international office Patrick Stephens submitted a report to Minister of National Security Martin Joseph that included recommendations to reform and modernize aspects of Trinidad's judicial and law enforcement systems, and Dolan said the Prime Minister's Office sent a letter to the High Commission agreeing to the project concept.

CANADA MAY PICK UP THE TAB

¶3. (SBU) Dolan and British Deputy High Commissioner Geoff Patton told us that the CPS currently lacks funding to implement the program, which is essentially the cost of posting a CPS official in Trinidad to work from the High Commission and within the GOTT justice system. The Brits turned to others for assistance at the end of 2009, and the Canadian High Commission expressed an interest and willingness to seek funding.

14. (SBU) Canadian POL/ECON/PAO Counselor Stephen Doust told us at the January 11 meeting that the Government of Canada (GOC) recently focused new interest and funding on its Andean, Central American and Caribbean technical assistance programming. Doust described the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program (ACCBP) as having USD 9.5 million available for 2009-10 and USD 14.3 million per year thereafter. ACCBP programs, he said, address issues such as illicit drugs, corruption, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, money laundering and proceeds of crime, security system reform, and crime prevention.

15. (SBU) Doust said he has applied for ACCBP funding to bring the British expert to Trinidad after adjusting the program's parameters to meet GOC goals, and expects an answer by the end of January. Doust admitted that his proposal to fund a British program with Canadian taxpayer money may be a bit of a hard sell within the GOC, but he said the proposal has two main advantages in that it meets the newly defined GOC priorities for the region and is immediately ready to launch.

COMMENT: DECONFLICTING PROJECTS AND LEVERAGING RESOURCES

16. (SBU) The Brits suggested that they may have other implementation-ready programs that they cannot currently fund and for which they may seek our assistance in launching cooperatively. The USG has common interests in TT and the region with governments such as Britain and Canada, and we will continue to work with our counterparts from those Missions and others, both directly and via informal channels such as the mini-Dublin Group, to avoid redundancy in program ideas and to leverage resources and enhance the impact of our technical assistance programming here.

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